




Memorandum

Date: February 10, 1999

To: Stephen Kashiwada, Acting Director
Department of Water Resources

From: Lester A. Snow, Executive Director
CALFED Bay-Delta Program 

Re: Acquisition of Delta Property for Water Resources Planning Flexibility

In a memo dated December 18, 1998 Bob Potter announced the proposed acquisition from a willing seller of approximately 4.5 acres of riverfront property contiguous with existing DWR property in Hood. On the same day he briefed the CALFED Policy Group on the reasons for the proposed acquisition and the proposed environmental documentation process. He indicated that the proposed acquisition would help assure future water resources planning flexibility, as the property could provide developed access to the Sacramento River for potential fisheries investigations, through-Delta conveyance facilities, or dual transfer conveyance. This is consistent with CALFED's short-term and long-term planning objectives and the framing of the CALFED Preferred Alternative as a staged decision making, staged implementation process.

In addition, it is our understanding that DWR is actively evaluating the property for a variety of beneficial interim uses, such as housing maintenance equipment and personnel for the USFWS Stone Lakes Wildlife Refuge, providing a storage and staging area for north Delta flood fighting, and providing office and research space for the Cosumnes Consortium (jointly sponsored by U.C Davis and The Nature Conservancy). The property could also house a Delta interpretive center, which could involve coordination with the State Department of Parks and Recreation, the State Railroad Museum, and other agencies. Although none of these potential uses have been fully explored, there is sufficient interest and potential to convince CALFED that the facility could provide for diverse public benefits in addition to meeting the primary objective of the acquisition.

The public comment period for the Initial Study and Draft Negative Declaration began on December 21, 1998 and ended on January 21, 1999. DWR distributed the Initial

CALFED Agencies

California The Resources Agency
 Department of Fish and Game
 Department of Water Resources
 California Environmental Protection Agency
 State Water Resources Control Board

Federal Environmental Protection Agency
 Department of the Interior
 Fish and Wildlife Service
 Bureau of Reclamation
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service

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Study and Draft Negative Declaration directly to elected officials representing the area, the Delta Protection Commission, and local reclamation districts. The State Clearinghouse distributed the package to eleven State agencies. The Delta Protection Commission notified its cooperating agencies about the proposed acquisition in its Pending Projects Memo, dated January 15, 1999.

Since the comment period opened, CALFED staff and consultants have discussed the proposed acquisition with a number of agency representatives and about 20 leaders in the environmental, agricultural, and urban stakeholder communities.

It is CALFED's understanding that no adverse comments were received by DWR during the comment period. CALFED and DPC staff have also received no significant adverse comments. The response from Delta interests can be summarized as a recognition of the potential local benefits that may accrue from use of the property, which has stood unused since 1995, coupled with some concern about the role this property might have in advancing the dual conveyance concept in the long run. The general reaction from other stakeholders has been that the acquisition of this property for future water resources planning flexibility and beneficial interim uses is a reasonable step to take at this time, and not of sufficient magnitude to warrant more extensive review.

Based on CALFED's independent assessment of the potential interim and long-term benefits of the proposed purchase and feedback from the stakeholder community, it is our recommendation that DWR proceed with the acquisition process. It is our understanding that any significant change in land use subsequent to purchase will be undertaken only after the appropriate level of environmental evaluation, documentation, and stakeholder discussion.

cc: Mary Nichols
Patrick Wright